

ACE Mentoring Program Offers Opportunities for Builders



*From the left, NAHB's marketing vice president Mark Pursell; scholarship winner Samrawit Fikru-Belew; and Gregory Hunt, chairman of the local ACE scholarship committee.
Photo: Gunnar Lucko*

Nearly 200 students, mentors, directors and corporate sponsors of the ACE Mentor Program of the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area gathered at the National Housing Center in Washington, D.C. on May 1 to honor 13 scholarship recipients for 2007.

Under the national ACE Mentor Program, volunteer mentors from leading construction and design firms help high school students explore career opportunities in architecture, engineering and construction management.

Samrawit Fikru-Belew of Bell Multicultural High School in Washington, D.C., received a \$10,000 scholarship sponsored by Clark Construction, NAHB, The Matthews Group, Parsons Corporation and the Sumitomo Corporation.

"I have learned so many things during the past two years that I wouldn't have been able to without the ACE Program," she said. Fikru-Belew will attend Purdue University in the fall to study chemical engineering.

The Washington chapter of ACE has six mentor groups in Washington, D.C.; Fairfax County, Va.; and Montgomery County, Md. following more than 80 students. Some of the students have been working on multi-use and multifamily projects in the metro area. The chapter is looking for more home builders to participate.

Gunnar Lucko, assistant professor of civil engineering and director of the Construction Engineering and Management Program in the Department of Civil Engineering at The Catholic University of America, said that he is working with 12 students in the program and is extremely proud of their accomplishments. Five of them were awarded scholarships.

Started in 1994, ACE currently has chapters in 60 cities working with 743 high schools, and the numbers continue to increase every year.

Mark Pursell, NAHB's senior staff vice president of marketing and sales, said that he finds serving on the board of directors of the D.C. chapter an extremely worthwhile experience. "I encourage home builders to contact their local ACE chapter and help young people in their communities learn about careers in our industry," he said.

Participation in ACE offers home builders the opportunity to enhance their company's image in the industry and the local community, to network with other mentors and to connect with talented and motivated students who have the potential to become their future full-time employees.

"ACE participants make great summer employees," said Christopher Reseigh, president of the board for the D.C. chapter. "Companies can contact their local chapters for access to high-quality young workers who already have an interest and experience in architecture, engineering and construction."

For more information about the national ACE program, or e-mail Mark Pursell at NAHB, or call him at 800-368-5242 x8477.

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